



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Health Administration
Washington DC 20420**

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UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH'S INFORMATION LETTER

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VOLUNTARY SERVICE (VAVS)
NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (NAC) 2003 RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. This letter transmits recommendations adopted by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VAVS) National Advisory Committee (NAC) at its 2003 annual meeting in Indianapolis, IN, and provides Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) comments.
2. The following 2003 recommendations are written verbatim as adopted by the VAVS NAC. These recommendations are identified by quotations and each is accompanied by the respective Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) comment: **NOTE:** *The acronym VHA refers to the Veterans Health Administration, the acronym CTVHCS refers to the Central Texas Veterans Health Care System, and the acronym VISN refers to the Veterans Integrated Service Network.*
 - a. **RECOMMENDATION:** "Recommends Chiefs of Voluntary Service (or whatever designation in that position may have) be directed by VHA to preserve the integrity of the local VAVS Committee meetings, i.e., in some integrated stations the VAVS meetings are being held by closed circuit TV at the primary facility and the other facilities are taken out of the loop. Discussions are being made on the primary facility only and others travel sometimes great distance to watch a TV presentation that does not apply to them (Example CTVHCS)."
 - VA COMMENT:** Approved. The integrity of the local VAVS Committees must be maintained. VAVS Representatives and volunteers are considered stakeholders and their opinions and interaction are valuable. Facility management should make every effort to maximize communication to this audience.
 - b. **RECOMMENDATION:** "VHA should institute a preceptorship (i.e., training) program for Voluntary Service Program Managers that would provide unified quality standards, and ensure the professionalism of all Voluntary Service staff. This would provide consistency and continuity, enhancing the interaction of staff, participating organizations, and volunteers."
 - VA COMMENT:** Approved. Voluntary Service has been approved for ten interns in the Fiscal Year 2004 Technical Career Field Intern Program. Although this program is not for VAVS Program Managers, it will posture Voluntary Service Specialists to be in a position to apply and qualify for the Voluntary Service Managers positions when they become vacant.

c. **RECOMMENDATION:** “VHA should encourage facility and VISN directors to incorporate Voluntary Service resources in business and strategic plans, and should develop performance measures reflecting the impact and utilization of those resources.”

VA COMMENT: Approved. The Communication Committee of the National Leadership Board (NLB) will encourage NLB leadership to incorporate Voluntary Service into their local Business Plan. Voluntary Service has developed a tool to identify programs that support the Vision 2020 and the Network Directors’ Performance Measures.

3. VHA Central Office, Voluntary Service Office (10C2), will distribute a copy of this Information Letter to all current VAVS NAC National Representatives.

S/ Nevin M. Weaver for
Robert H. Roswell, M.D.
Under Secretary for Health

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